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AUTHOR Dixon, John; Stratta, Leslie
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ABSTRACT

One of a number of reports of a study of the range of written tasks that can be completed successfully by 14- to 16-year-old students, this booklet suggests that argument is an important means of learning and an inevitable and proper concern of English teachers. The discussion rejects the characteristic forms of argument questions found on most traditional essay examinations and, therefore, taught in most composition classrooms. It proposes instead that English teachers teach students to handle ideas in general terms by leading them through four stages of argument development: (1) the ruminative or reflective essay in which the writer is given the opportunity to mull over a human issue or field of enquiry without the demand to formulate a final position on it; (2) the advocacy essay in which the writer wishes to recommend a decision or present a point of view; (3) the essay that argues through an issue or justifies a decision in which the writer takes account of opposing viewpoints and counters or concedes them in a rational manner; and (4) the essay that attempts an overview in which the writer tries to organize and represent the range of arguments available on all sides of an issue or decision. (AEA)

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Achievements in Writing at 16+

"Argument": what does it mean to teachers of English?

by

John Dixon
Bretton Hall College of Higher Education

Leslie Stratta
Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham

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The "Achievements and Standards at 16+" project forms part of the Schools Council's fifth programme of work - 'Improving the Examination System'. The project aims to explore the range of written tasks that can be tackled successfully by different pupils at 16+ and to describe the positive achievements in written work associated with selected grades in 16+ examinations.

A traditional approach

Examination papers offer us a strong clue to the way teachers of English have thought, and in many cases are still thinking, about Argument. Take this question for example (1): '"Young people today have no individuality. They conform to the tastes and interests of their friends and seldom think for themselves." Do you agree?' What seem to be its distinguishing characteristics?

(i) The pupil is offered a proposition to discuss.

(ii) The proposition is concerned with a highly general category, (all?) "young people".

(iii) It states something as categorically true of each and every one of them.

(iv) It thus assumes sophisticated sociological knowledge about young people "today".

(v) It appears inexplicitly to imply a contrast with a "yesterday" - or bygone years, shall we say - and thus presupposes equally sophisticated sociological knowledge about the past.

(vi) By putting a question in a closed form - "Do you agree?" - which initially invites the answer "yes" or "no", young writers are constrained in their whole approach to the issue.

(vii) The question appears in a timed examination: it is to be answered in 50 minutes, without preparation and without reference to any sources.

To start with the proposition: how seriously is it to be taken, we wonder, by pupil, or by examiner for that matter? If the candidate like other "young people" is basically a conformist (according to the proposition), it is highly unlikely that he or she will disagree! Presumably a question such as this is simply part of a language game, derived from a debating tradition which aims to provoke a response rather than explore a real issue. Yet it is a very common practice. Consider the following examples and their likely effect on the pupils:

"Science has failed us. Let us abandon the machines and return to a simpler life." What are your views? (AEB GCE O Level English Language Paper I, November 1980)

"Just look at that damage! Vandals should be treated more severely." "No, that's unfair. Vandalism is the fault of our society." What do you think about the causes and cures of vandalism? (Oxford Local Examinations. GCE O Level English Language Paper I, Summer 1980).

We can imagine that in the examination room many actual candidates will be put on the defensive, or at best impelled towards advocacy. Small wonder that many teachers advise their pupils not to answer the Argument question in examinations!

If pupils avoid all Argument questions, the teacher of English is no longer taking responsibility for helping them to explore and master forms of rational argument. Let us be clear at this point, then, that we are not suggesting that issues of conformity and thinking things out for oneself are not worth discussing with young people. It is difficult to see how they can be avoided in the English classroom. We are not challenging the issues, but the characteristic forms of question found throughout traditional examinations. Will questions such as the above help young people to reflect with care on their own attitudes, beliefs and opinions - and to learn in doing so? Propositions that are so general seem to distance the problem - and demand the impossible! - rather than draw writers into an engaged search for the best answers they can find by reflecting on their own experience and that of others.

Why argue? It's time that we English teachers asked ourselves what we hope pupils will learn from the activity. Is it going to be a debating skill, an ability to hold your ground, come what may? Or is the emphasis rather on thinking - on reasoning to discover what it is you think and feel about such an issue, and to present a considered, personal viewpoint?

The continued setting - and acceptance - of questions of this type reflects, in our view, an uncertainty amongst English teachers about what they are trying to do. So deep is this uncertainty that there are well-known teachers of English today (2) who either ignore Argument or seem to be suggesting that it has no place in the English lesson, and that literature and the world of the imagination is sufficient. Curiously, though, English Literature papers are full of somewhat similar questions:

> "'All the play's complexities resolve upon a single opposition:
> 'Egypt is romantic but wrong, Rome is repulsive but right!"
> Discuss. (JMB GCE A Level Literature, June 1981)

It is hard to believe that the washback effect of such questions in the classroom can be other than detrimental, reinforcing uncertainties about the aims of English teaching that are already present. Our purpose in this discussion paper is to suggest that Argument is an important means of learning, and an inevitable and proper concern of the teacher of English.

A classroom context: how do the issues arise?

The General Proposition question inevitably pushes teaching to a level of abstraction which in our view is self-defeating. So let's go back several steps. What the teacher has to ask is: How do you get to the point in the classroom where Argument seems the natural next step?

Let's look at another issue this time phrased in a different way: "What are some of the problems facing Asian youngsters in Britain?" - an issue that arose quite naturally in a multi-cultural classroom in Birmingham. (3) We'd expect to start from detailed accounts of experiences that had affected individuals in the class and their friends. Not all these narratives would point exactly the same way, perhaps, and it's just this kind of complex texture in experience that the teacher should be working for initially.

As the class or group listen, the teacher will offer the opportunity for those listening to ask the story tellers questions about their thoughts and feelings encouraging a more reflective stance to emerge, especially as a variety of experiences are reviewed. So the foundation is the particular experience, often recounted as a story. As pupils begin to make connections between the stories - while still remaining faithful to their uniqueness - small and local generalisations begin to be made. This is an important step. And doesn't it have parallels to what happens in a writer like George Eliot, when, in the

course of her narrative, reflective and generalised comments develop?

In any class it is reasonable to assume that pupils will be at different staging points in their development as writers of argument. (We have already demonstrated similar differences in pupils' development as writers of narrative at 16+.) (4) What can a teacher suggest and encourage then? For some pupils, an extended written narrative may be demanding enough. However, one step into a more generalised perspective can be made by suggesting that some of them could try to sum up what they have learnt from thinking through their own story and those of their friends. At some point there will be pupils who can turn that "summing up" into a new kind of exploratory writing that we want to call a "ruminative essay". This offers an opportunity for teachers and pupils to begin to review the experiences as a whole, to build and explore a pattern of connections, to realise the typicality of many elements. This is the difficult step. All of us - adults as well as youngsters - are capable of doing it badly, of making crude generalisations and refusing to acknowledge complexity.

The teacher has an important role to play in helping pupils to map out some of the typical comments, key features and broader issues that connect them. So we would expect teachers to encourage preliminary drafts and to respond to these in a collaborative way. There's a delicate interplay possible between the pupil's initial perceptions and speculations (whether crudely or tentatively expressed) and the teacher's insight into their potential organisation and development.

We call these "ruminative essays" because one isn't necessarily arguing a case. The emphasis is on turning over and finding out what you think and feel at this moment in time. The process of finding out - and thus the re-drafting especially - is as important as any final statement. This seems to us a vital activity to encourage in the English classroom. It offers a chance, that's unlikely to be found in many other subjects, to move from personal experience towards reflective understanding of the human condition. (We would argue that this has value in its own right alongside the study of literature.)

Of course there are titles in current examination papers that might - and ought to - encourage this kind of reflective work. For instance:

> "Family Life
>
> Give your views on the importance of family life." (West Midlands Examinations Board CSE English Language Paper I, May 1981)

However, despite the title, we can't be sure of the examiners' intentions. Have they envisaged, for instance, the complex processes described above?

The movement from unique individual experiences to a sort of map that gives some kind of overview, placing them in relationship to each other and offering the opportunity for reflective insight seems to us a fundamental part of education. What's more, as pupils begin to disagree over the interpretation of "problems" such as some Asian girls face, or actions needed to resolve them - a dauntingly complex issue - argument with some value for the pupils will almost inevitably arise.

Thus we see this kind of rumination, of mulling over, as an important bridge into learning how to explore and master forms of rational argument.

Arguing from personal experience

Let's now go back to consider some of the underlying demands of Argument questions in examination papers, for instance, "Should young people be encouraged to take up week-end jobs?" (5) Many pupils at 13-16 will take a personal interest in this question - if not in that precise form. There is a value for them and their teachers in looking at the class's experiences in a spirit of rational enquiry, taking the opportunity to weigh and assess these. As with the problem of Asian girls, you'd expect to start from detailed stories of individual experiences, for example, "the first day", "problems with customers", "restocking". As the class or group listen, the teacher will offer the opportunity for questions about what people were feeling and thinking, and will lead towards a more reflective stance, reviewing the experience and possibly generalising from it. There is an opportunity then to invite stories that challenge or modify any simple generalisation; in effect, one is sketching a map of the issues to bear in mind. Thus narrative lays the foundation for embryonic generalisations, which can go to form the basis of argument.

So far we have been looking solely at personal experiences, but it is possible to go further. Questionnaires can be devised, leading to (or deriving from) interviews with employers, trade unionists and "week-end workers" from other classes. Thus, pupils learn to move beyond the personal, and to recognise that a broader perspective is possible. They begin to place their personal knowledge in a wider frame. They can see what other people have made of opportunities to work, and realise the choice and variety that may exist. The complexity of the topic opens up. At the same time they are beginning to learn to spot points of view and generalisations that are rash, poorly supported, or crudely formulated, on the one hand, or on the other to appreciate those that are balanced, that take detailed evidence into account, and that offer carefully qualified generalisation. At its best this approach ensures that pupils don't lose touch as they generalise, with the underlying implication of the question: how does it affect a person's life?

So far, the thrust of teaching of this kind is on process. As the class begin to generalise, some of them will be far from a final position, their notions still being undeveloped - and some may even be bemused. Equally, as they generalise, differences of opinion and attitude will emerge. There will be conflicting reasons for taking a week-end job. There will be differences in the weighting that individuals give to personal stories and to the "data" collected from outside the class. Some may be concerned to argue through to a personal decision, others may want to advocate the advantages or disadvantages of a particular kind of job. Therefore there is no single "Question" equally well suited to students who take a week-end job with a fixed target of cash in mind, on the one hand, and others who see it as a chance to be treated as an adult for a change. But the teacher has the opportunity to observe the way pupils get involved in real arguments as they try to generalise. A good teacher will then seize the opportunity to steer them into fruitful ways of reasoning through some of the points at issue. In fact it will help if he or she already has a provisional, tentative structure of possible issues in mind - so long as this is open to modification as the classroom discussion continues. As we ourselves sketched this out, we kept in mind two "dimensions" which help to clarify some of the demands the task makes on the pupil.

(a) Is the argument about your own position, or a decision you have to take? Or is it about something that affects other people rather than yourself, or other people just as much as you?

(b) Are you trying to detach yourself and take a relatively objective stance? Or are you deeply involved? - and want to remain so!

Here are a few examples to indicate the range of questions that will result from the kind of classroom enquiry we have sketched out:

- You want to convince your parents that you should (not) take up a particular week-end job. What arguments would you put forward?

- You've seen a particular job you would like. How do you go about convincing an employer that you're very suitable?

- There are some week-end jobs in your area that seem to you particularly interesting. How would you put the case for them to a younger class?

- Take a range of week-end jobs in your area: which would you not recommend, and why?

- What sort of young people would benefit most from doing a week-end job, in your experience?...

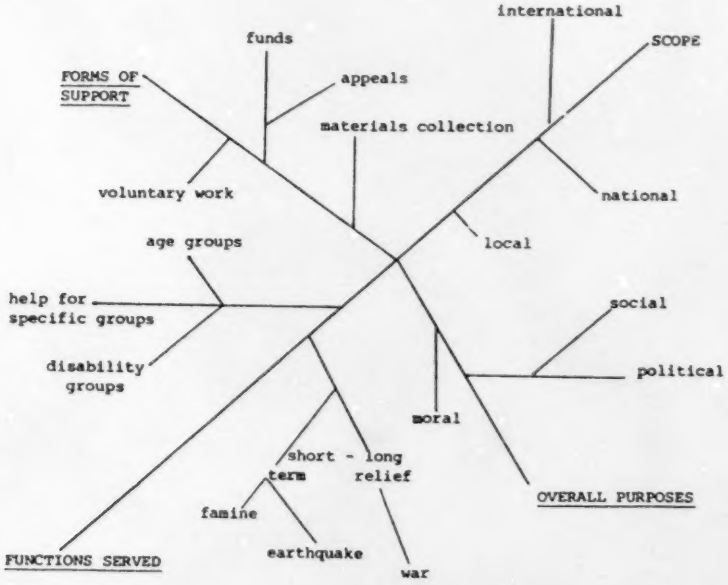
What we would underline in a range of questions such as these is that they demand response to personal experience, mulling it over, and viewing it in the light of further evidence, from classmates and "authorities" outside the school. Some arise from a personal, involved position; others - the last one, especially - encourage a broader, more general perspective. None invite a Yes/No answer, as the original question did (Should young people... be encouraged?). None are so general as to ask a huge overarching question about <u>all</u> young people, or <u>all</u> week-end jobs.

This is not to say that generalised argument is never important, nor that pupils should be discouraged from arguing towards general conclusions. They will do so anyway! - not least, in their lives outside school. What we hope they will learn to do in considering a specific issue is to judge how far it is possible and sensible to generalise. The point then is to develop a teaching strategy that encourages pupils to check their arguments against experience - including their own - and starts from small-scale generalisations rather than impossibly huge questions, many of them beyond the competence, we suspect, of the examiners who set them - if they were constrained to answer unseen in fifty minutes or so!

<u>Arguments calling for public knowledge</u>

So far we have discussed issues that take personal experience as their springboard and often require pupils to take up a personal position. However, as we have shown, a personal position may be challenged, modified and developed by listening to other people's experiences - whether classmates or people from outside the school. But we are not intending to imply that all Argument will be explored in this way. There are other questions which call for a good deal of public knowledge before any adequate personal position can be taken up. An example of what we have in mind is the following examination question: "What charity or good cause most readily gets your support? Give reasons for your choice." (6)

This is a real issue, well worth thinking through. As they start to think about charities, pupils begin to realise that there are many different kinds. Is it a charity near at home, or on an international scale? Are large funds needed, or is it a specific small appeal? Is it voluntary help rather than fund raising that's required? Is the "Good cause" moral, political or social? And so on. Once again one could start from experience in the class, such as raising funds or taking on special projects, but we guess that the need would soon be felt to consult further information from pamphlets, appeals and full-time workers. Realising the massive range of causes appealing for support raises new problems, as does the mass of data that a class can accumulate. It's a question of how to organise the material into a set of choices, probably in the form of a tree diagram or topic web. Here is the beginning of such a topic web, for example:



Pupils will need help in sorting out the appropriate general categories to use. Of course, the investigation may not change their first opinion of the best cause to support, but at least their decision will be made against a wider background of knowledge and thus be more thoughtful.

Working in this way, we expect that many pupils will come to realise the difficulty of making such choices entirely on rational grounds. Attitudes and feelings must play a part. Indeed an individual may find it impossible to choose any one cause. Isn't this assumption in the original examination question unnecessarily restricting? Most of us, we guess, are relativists in such matters.

When it comes to writing, then, an investigation that draws mainly on public knowledge raises several new possibilities. The topic web, for instance, is a powerful way of introducing the class to thinking in categories, and thus to sorting out appropriate criteria for categorisations. Once set out in a web or tree diagram, the categories become a powerful aid to further thinking and reflection. One can see how any choice relates to the overall pattern of choices, and thus argue for those aspects that represent one's final decision(s).

If groups in the class decide to appeal for support (and action) for their cause, then they may have to write for a real audience. Their "question" will now become personal and pragmatic - and this seems to us a good thing. This is more purposeful than the kind of fantasy debate on public issues invited by a question such as "What would happen if we abolished all examinations?", which we would argue is unrealistic. What pupils need to argue about are issues involving real human struggle not the waving of fairy wands.

It is perhaps in this section that English teachers themselves will find most to argue about. Are pupils in the English classroom to move beyond personal experience (and literature) into areas of public knowledge that demand investigation if certain personal decisions - whether social, political or moral - are to be taken with fuller understanding? At this point all we would say is: If the teacher of English doesn't take the responsibility, who does? And in any case, the writing that results seems to have a natural place in the spectrum needed to assess written competence in English.

Why do we need to argue?

At this point let us return to the seven "distinguishing characteristics" we pointed to in the first examination question (p.I). Our article has already challenged each of these, and we have begun to sketch out something of the range beyond that restricted, traditional model. At this point, then, we must try to extend it.

(i) Beyond "propositions" We suggest as a start that there are two broad (and overlapping) categories of things we argue about. On the one hand there are arguments directly concerned with "action". These may lead to and justify decisions, the formulation of rules and laws, or the challenging of social mores and conventions. On the other hand there are arguments concerned with "notions", including attitudes, beliefs, opinions and philosophies of life.

Of course, these will indirectly affect our actions - often offering justifying arguments for them. If we think of characteristic questions raised by each type of argument, they can be set out broadly as follows:

"Actions"	"Notions"
e.g. Support for a cause	e.g. Racial conflict as a cause of problems among Asian youths.
What to do?	How true or adequate an idea?
- what alternatives to consider - which option to prefer?	- how well founded? - what evidence? - how well formulated?
How to behave?	- how well thought out? - how self-critical or rational?
- with what justification?	

When we are specifically looking at other people's actions or notions there is a third kind of argument we get into: over interpretations. Then the question raised is whether we have adequately interpreted their behaviour, or whether we have been scrupulous in following the precise form of their ideas or beliefs. (Interestingly enough, these are precisely the kinds of arguments that also arise in discussing a work of literature.)

(ii) Beyond general categories So far as argument leading to action is concerned it will be obvious that we start by discussing the decisions of individuals at particular moments. We have already suggested the importance of this approach for "week-end jobs", and the problems of Asian youngsters. It's from that kind of discussion that one may lead towards generalisations - often severely qualified - about a variety of ways to behave or things to do in certain types of situation.

Discussion of this kind isn't the only way to open up an argument. Through role play and simulation, pupils can try to get inside a problem, act out the process of reaching a decision, and realise the consequences. They can then turn reflectively to discuss what it felt like. Similarly in exploring unique human experiences through literature, one is constantly focussing on the evaluation of a particular action - and this too leads to argument. In all these approaches, therefore, it is natural, we feel, to start argument at the particular, unique and individual act or decision, and not at the level of general categories.

Now let us consider arguments over beliefs and opinions. The inevitable grounds for our "notions" about life are personal experiences, limited though they may be. These are modified and built on whenever we attend carefully and critically to the experiences of others, or investigate further for ourselves. The broader the issue, the more likely it is that teachers will need to encourage 14 to 17 year olds to qualify any generalisations they make, and often to remain tentative. So it's important for pupils to realise how and when to qualify any generalisations they make. The ability to refer to "few", "some", "many", "most" - "in my experience" or "on the evidence available" - is part of learning to think rationally. Equally pupils should recognise the effort it costs to be in a position to generalise, as we have tried to indicate.

(iii) Beyond personal knowledge We have tried to suggest why much argument is fruitless until people have tried to make some sense of their personal experience and reconsidered their habitual viewpoint through exchanging and probing each other's stories, and ruminating about their overall impressions. So in some instances personal knowledge counts for a lot.

However, as we have also shown, there are questions which by their nature force one to recognise that personal knowledge isn't enough, and in such cases argument would be pointless without a wider frame drawn from public knowledge. The teacher has to help pupils realise that need, but at the same time to set some limits to the amount of public knowledge that has to be made sense of. Vast, overarching questions about all "young people", all "charities", all "young offenders" etc., demanding as they do the most thorough sociological investigation, are quite beyond most of us in English teaching, let alone our pupils.

(iv) Beyond a categorical yes or no As we work through certain issues and recognise their complexity we begin to see that a simple yes/no answer won't be sufficient. This is a very important kind of learning. With complex human problems, feelings of ambivalence, tentativeness and uncertainty may be a proper sign of a step towards maturity.

Equally, if one starts with a firm opinion and begins to realise this is not tenable, there are several alternatives besides outright rejection! We can modify and reformulate our position - and in a wide variety of ways. In the course of doing so, pupils learn to use language with greater precision.

We have no wish to argue against "making up your mind", when it is a question of supporting one side or another, deciding to act in one way or another - choosing between two alternatives. What we are saying is that it is equally important to learn to recognise when a choice between alternatives is not sufficient.

(v) Beyond snap answers If our paper so far is broadly valid, it will be clear that we consider a 50 minute burst on an unseen question - without discussion, reference or resources - an inadequate test of a pupil's written competence in serious argument. As a model for learning and developing rational thought, it's almost asking for failure.

If ever there was a case for encouraging pupils to have second thoughts, this is it. A course work approach seems inevitable.

Functions of Argument and Ways of Writing Them

In setting up course work, the teacher of English will naturally want individual pupils to move from simpler to more complex functions for Argument, and from easier to more difficult forms of writing. Probably to date most course work Arguments have been bedevilled by the traditional model. What we should like to do here, then, is to offer tentative suggestions for a different direction.

Let's take Functions of Argument first. Before Argument starts there is often a need to clear the ground, and this is where we see an important role for ruminative essays. Once a pupil becomes personally involved in an issue and feels tentatively or strongly that there is a line of action (or thought) that should be proposed, this leads naturally to what we would call advocacy. However, if and when such a pupil realises that the proposed line can be strongly challenged or countered in part, the whole task becomes more complex. Within the line of argument, some acknowledgement has to be made of counter-arguments, and these will need to be refuted or conceded. So the justification for one's decision or point of view becomes more complex, taking into account alternative views. We would call this function, arguing through an issue, or arguing through to a decision - rather than simply advocating a position. Clearly many pupils will find this difficult, and one fruitful method is to suggest that they trace through the development (and modification) of their position as they encountered various challenges to their initial ideas and attitudes.

G H Mead has shown the value (7) of trying to internalise the other's point of view and to express it on their behalf, and some teachers may find this a useful teaching strategy, especially when the differences between opposing views are subtle and not easy to articulate. This leads on naturally to a final function we ought to mention, when pupils face the demand to stand back from the opposing parties and try as best they can to sum up either for an audience new to the issue, or for one familiar with it but needing to get an overview of the arguments advanced. With oral argument - the most natural form in the classroom - there is nearly always an ebb and flow between proposals, objections, reinforcing evidence, counter-arguments etc., so that before any decision is taken such a summing up is more often than not essential.

We offer, then, four broad divisions of function:

- ruminative "essay"
- advocacy
- arguing through an issue
- attempting an overview

In each of the last three what's written may simply have the effect of taking a pupil a step further in clarifying his or her own point of view - a variation on the ruminative, reflective essay -, or it may be effectively addressed to an audience as an Argument worth their consideration. (We'll summarise these functions in more detail at the end of the section.)

Now for Ways of Writing. Argument can be presented in many different ways. So inevitably through their study of literature pupils will have met Argument in a variety of forms: parables, satires such as "Animal Farm", "documentary" and Brechtian drama, SciFi utopias, and other kinds of persuasive narrative. Similarly, of course, in everyday conversation and classroom discussion it's a natural thing for people to use anecdotes to make a point.

In drama, narrative and anecdote, we notice, the argument may not always be explicit. The characters and situations are regarded as typifying a pattern of ideas or viewpoints. Of course, it is always open to the writer or speaker to be more explicitly didactic and include a commentary on the action in general terms. So literary forms offer important ways of arguing for pupils to learn to understand or use in English lessons.

In addition, though - as the thrust of this whole paper indicates - we want pupils to be able to handle ideas in more general terms. Personal experiences

can still find a place, but they become illustrations to general points, made explicitly within an overall line of argumen . helping to give it concrete force. The ability to generalise, to organise examples in appropriate categories, moving from implicit to explicit Argument, is a vitally important way of handling human experience. But it is difficult. Organising abstract ideas into coherent, rational sequences, in sustained chunks of speech or writing, seems to be a relctively late development in human history and within the individual person.

It is clear that there will be very different characteristic achievements to describe in Argument conveyed through drama or narrative as compared to generalised Argument. We hope shortly to publish a booklet in which examples of generalised Argument (8) are discussed in detail.

Functions summarised:

1. Ruminative or reflective essay. The writer is given the opportunity to mull over a human issue or field of enquiry without the demand to formulate a final position on it. The "essay", using the word in its original sense, is an attempt to explore and sift personal experiences and the experiences of others, thus discovering patterns of significance and ways of viewing them. (e.g. Some of the problems facing Asian youngsters in Britain.)

2. Advocacy. The writer wishes to recommend a decision or present a point of view. In doing so, s/he may marshall a number of points, together with supporting evidence, in a rational way. (e.g. Why I'm well suited for this week-end job.) There'll normally be a persuasive edge to this kind of writing, and sometimes emotional appeals will be included.

3. Arguing through an issue or Justifying a decision. Taking account of opposing viewpoints and countering or conceding them in a rational manner, the writer argues through to a viewpoint on an issue, or a course of action. (e.g. Why do some parents think it important to restrict or guide teenagers in their choice of clothes, and which reasons do you think are justifiable?)

When action is implied, it's perhaps convenient to call this kind of Argument "justifying a decision". This might call for the analysis and evaluation of a situation or body of evidence, and should include a rational review of alternative proposals. (e.g. Set down the reasons why you propose to choose specific courses, and to reject others, from the range of options offered in the 4th or 5th year.)

4. Attempting an overview. For the sake of an audience, the writer tries to organise and represent the range of arguments available on all sides of an issue or decision. (The simplest form would be For and Against.) Readers are left to make their own decision on this basis. (e.g. Given the current high rate of unemployment what arguments would you need to take account of before deciding whether to stay on full-time in education or to leave school.)

Coda

This article is itself an exercise in Argument. Through collaborative talking and writing we have tried - for better or worse - to think through to a new position. If the ideas are rational and valid, there are two consequences:

(a) Changes will be needed in classroom practice. These will affect not only approaches, but also the teacher's sense of the staging points that may form a developmental sequence in written argument.

(b) Changes in the method of assessment will be needed. We can see no case for the continued inclusion of certain kinds of question, typical of external examinations. Instead, for really searching Argument, examiners will need to turn to course work and new forms of questions, where pupils have time to discover, clarify and have second thoughts about what they do think and feel, and the grounds for their beliefs (or recommendations).

In conclusion then, we want this to be a paper that affects both notions and actions!

REFERENCES

1. JMB GCE O Level Language Paper A, Part I 1976

2. See for example Peter Abbs' article "English within the Arts: A Pattern for the Eighties" in English in Education Vol 15 No I Spring 1981 which seems to be arguing that English should be restricted entirely to the expressive arts. There is a similar argument for English as "Art Speech" in David Allen's book "English Teaching since 1965" (Heinemann 1980). Neither of them in their philosophy of the subject seem to allow for rational argument to be included.

3. We are grateful to Ms Pauline Cowen, Holte Comprehensive School, Birmingham for this example.

4. See Achievement in Writing at 16+ (1981) by John Dixon and Leslie Stratta. (Copies may be obtained free from Mr L Stratta, Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham, enclosing a 12½p stamp for postage.)

5. AEB GCE O Level English Language Syllabus 2. Paper I November 1975.

6. AEB GCE O Level English Language Syllabus 2. Paper I November 1975.

7. Mind, Self and Society (1934) by G H Mead (University of Chicago Press).

8. For a preliminary discussion of examples of generalised Argument see Criteria for Writing in English: Discussion Booklet I (1981) by John Dixon and Leslie Stratta. (Copies price 20p may be obtained from Southern Regional Examinations Board, 33 Carlton Crescent, Southampton SO9 4YL.